

1. What was / has been your occupation before entering politics?

I started my career as a journalist working for a newspaper in Elliot Lake and covered community, labour and environmental issues. The uranium mining and waste problems at Elliot Lake are where I formed my sense of environmental and social justice. I participated in the first environmental assessment on the decommissioning of a uranium mine in Canada in the late 1990s.

I moved into working as an editor at a First Nations newspaper, and then worked for a Tribal Council on sustainable forest management policies and helped create a First Nation owned forestry business. I worked with Indigenous communities on forest policy as an advocate within provincial forest policy. In 2001 I moved to Ottawa to work with the National Aboriginal Forestry Association where I became executive director. I have worked with community organizations, business leaders, provincial governments, Indigenous communities and federal agencies. I met Elizabeth May when we were both working on the National Forest Strategy. I joined the Green Party in 2008 and have served as Indigenous Affairs Critic since then. My husband and I opened a business in Kemptville in 2004.

2. Do you live in the riding and, if so, how long has it been your home?

I am a property owner and a small business owner in Kemptville where my husband and I operate Rekmans Automotive which has served Kemptville since 2004. I live in Osgoode Village which is 5 km from the Leeds Grenville Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes riding and have lived here for 18 years.

3. What has been your main involvement with your community outside of work (volunteer activities, etc.)?

I volunteered on a community project to publish a book about the experiences of Indigenous Peoples and the impact of uranium mining at Serpent River First Nation. I have volunteered on citizens advisory committees for provincial forest management planning and have volunteered on many boards for non-profit organizations, some local and some national. At present I volunteer on the Board of Directors for the Forest Stewardship Council of Canada.

4. In your life what event, or book, or speech, or song or even TV show has made the biggest impression on you and your political thinking? Why?

Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech has been very influential in my life's work because it speaks to social justice and the need for a more peaceful world. I believe in order to be progressive, we must address all outstanding social justice issues in Canada.

5. What previous politician, (alive or dead, but not currently in parliament) is a role model for you?

Mahatma Gandhi is a role model for me because he advocated for political change using peaceful resistance.

6. What policy in your party's platform do you think matters most to the people in your riding?

My top priority would be to work to eliminate poverty using the Guaranteed Livable Income and immediately improve the quality of life for the people in this riding. I would work on a housing first policy to address the growing concern of homelessness. As MP I will work with other elected members at the federal, provincial and municipal level to develop strategies and provide funding to deal with this crisis as soon as possible. I would work with other MPs to introduce legislation that will provide direct funding to municipalities of 1 point of GST so that communities could address their immediate and long overdue infrastructure projects. I would work with the communities in the riding on a connectivity strategy to rebuild transportation systems with green technologies that link communities. This would create local jobs and meet local priorities.

7. Recent polls suggest many Canadians are disillusioned with politics. If elected, what would you do to address those concerns?

I would work with other members of parliament to reform the electoral system in Canada so that voters would be fairly represented. I believe a percentage of votes should translate into a percentage of seats in the House of Commons.